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MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

BSU sees leadership change at GCCC

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Tim Thomas vividly remembers the first Bible study he conducted in 1980 as the new Baptist Student Union (BSU) director at Gulf Coast Community College (GCCC) in Perkinston.

"The school was providing a building for us, but the electrical system in the building couldn't power the heater and the lights at the same time. We had to heat up the building ahead of time, then turn off the heater and use the lights in hopes we could finish the Bible study before it got cold," he recalled.

The BSU ministry has undergone tremendous growth since those days, acquiring its own building at the Perkinston campus and tracking the school's expansion to additional campuses in Gulfport and Jackson County.

Thomas, a Fulton native and graduate of William Carey University in Hattiesburg and Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., retired June 30 after 28 years of service, turning over the leadership reins on July 1 to Matthew Middlecamp.

Shortly after Thomas arrived at GCCC, he convened a long-range planning committee. "The need for facilities was obvious. We also needed the staff and budget to support the BSU program as it grew," he said. "We committed to build a BSU center every five years, and pay for it."

"The first center at the Perkinston campus was occupied in 1982, and it was paid for in five years. The center at the Jefferson Davis campus in Gulfport was dedicated



REMEMBERING THE MINISTRY — Tim Thomas, retired director of the Baptist Student Unions on the three campuses of Gulf Coast Community College, visits his old office on the Jefferson Davis campus in Gulfport and reminisces about his 28 years of collegiate ministry. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

in 1986. The Jackson County campus center opened in the spring of 2005. As debt was retired, we were able to expand the staff and develop our finances."

The result is a long-distance, three-campus BSU ministry with three distinctive programs that may be the only one of its type in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) among two-year colleges.

"Jerry Merriman (retired director of collegiate ministries for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board) and I looked around the SBC for a model, but we couldn't find a program like this," Thomas said.

Thomas believes the buildings are the foundation for the ministry going forward, but adds, "You can't overestimate the leadership recognizing college campuses are great places to plant seeds of faith. Baptists in this area of the state see these campuses as magnificent mission fields, and provided the investment and the vision."

The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board also provides support to complement local Baptists' efforts to sustain the BSU centers.

"With facilities and a full staff, I believe we are on the threshold of taking a significant step toward reaching our ministry potential for our campuses. Seeing Christ impact the lives of students has always been both the hope and joy for my years of ministry with BSU," Thomas said.

Thomas doesn't intend to just fade

away into retirement. "I want to take time for physical and spiritual restoration, and then I want to help wherever I can. I'll see where God places me," he said.

Fayetteville, Ar., native Matthew Middlecamp jumped at the opportunity to become the new BSU director at GCCC. He recently graduated from New Orleans Seminary with a master of divinity degree in people group strategies.

"I had heard about the awesome things going on in collegiate ministries in Mississippi and the support the program receives from the top down. That's exciting," he said.

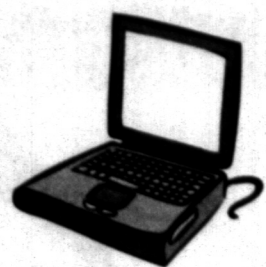
Middlecamp already had a pretty good idea of what the job entailed. His wife Jacque is the daughter of Lynn Lloyd, director of Baptist Collegiate Ministries at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville for more than 20 years. It was during his freshman year at the university that he felt called into ministry.

Middlecamp went on to serve an internship under his father-in-law. "I saw in him a passion for students and equipping them for ministry, and that helped confirm my call into this great work," Middlecamp said.

"College students have the potential to go anywhere in the world that God leads them. My vision is to reach, equip, and help send students to those places God would have them serve. The need is there, and God is calling. It's important that our students understand that and listen for His voice," he said.



GETTING STARTED — Matthew Middlecamp, who began his new duties July 1 as director of the Baptist Student Unions on the three campuses of Gulf Coast Community College, adjusts a sprinkler on the front lawn of the BSU at the Jefferson Davis campus in Gulfport. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



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When is 800 feet *not* 800 feet?

As this issue of The Baptist Record lands in mailboxes across the state on Thursday, the Mississippi Gaming Commission will be in session in Biloxi to hear arguments that casino developers should be able to scrap the law passed by legislators in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina that allowed them to move their gambling halls onshore.

The implications of such a move are massive.

In September 2005, just weeks after Hurricane Katrina flattened the Mississippi Gulf Coast and left thousands homeless and hungry, Governor Haley Barbour convened a special session of the Mississippi Legislature to first take care of the casinos. The result was a gambler's dream: legislators allowed casinos to move off the Gulf waters on which they had been confined, 800 feet onshore as measured from the mean high tide line along the beach.

It was a real sweetheart deal for the gamblers. Legislators even allowed the exclusion of any streets, roads, and utility rights of way from the 800-foot rule, which means that gamblers can move their tables of fortune considerably farther inland than 800 feet. The governor was only too eager to go along, quickly signing the measure into law.

As casino owners were scrambling to come ashore as fast as possible, anti-gambling groups including the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission and The Baptist Record warned that the new law was just the next step in the gamblers' grand plan to take over the state. Observers predicted that the 800-foot rule would soon be challenged, and they were right.

RW Development is building South Beach Biloxi, a large mixed-use develop-

ment that includes a proposed casino at its core. The company is petitioning the Mississippi Gaming Commission to redefine current law to favor their future casino at an inland site that is clearly not a legal location under state law. RW Development knows that, and the Gaming Commission knows that.

The City of Biloxi has already caved to the gamblers and endorsed RW Development's scheme to get around the law.

"The key issue is control of the land from the mean high tide water line inland 800 feet," said former state land commissioner John Ed Ainsworth in a July 6 article in The Clarion Ledger newspaper in Jackson.

Ainsworth, now a managing member of the Caillavet Street Development Group in Biloxi, is a gambling supporter who lobbied hard for passage of the special legislation that allowed casinos to move onshore. Still, Ainsworth calls it like he sees it with regard to the RW Development scheme.

"Gaming Commission regulations require that the applicant own or lease the land from the water line to the location of the casino and that the area be controlled by the applicant and an integral part of the project. If there is public sand beach between the high water line and the casino, it is impossible to comply with that regulation," he told The Clarion Ledger.

That's exactly the case with RW Development. There's a public beach in their way that they neither own, lease, nor control.

"RW will likely attempt to get around the control issue by claiming that you don't measure from the water's edge, as it presently exists but from the 'toe' of the sea wall, which is several hundred feet north of the present high water line," Ainsworth told The Clarion Ledger.

Ainsworth didn't predict which way the Gaming Commission would vote but he did say in the Clarion Ledger article, "If they approve the site without changing the

regulation, the anti-gaming groups will probably file suit. They will probably sue if they approve under any conditions."

What a mess, and we have our governor and legislators to thank for it. Since the first, small riverboat casinos opened along the Mississippi River in the early 1990s, the gamblers have calculated and contrived to move farther and farther inland. That fact is inarguable; if not, then why aren't they still on their small riverboats?

Regardless of the outcome of RW Development hearing on Thursday, be assured that the gambling/political complex in Mississippi will not rest until there are slot machines and blackjack tables as far north as the Tennessee state line. Their ultimate, unmistakable goal is to control the State of Mississippi as they control the State of Nevada.

Don't believe it? Just keep reading the news — and keep an 800-foot tape measure handy.

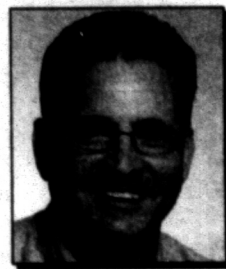
"SON, YOU CAN GO TO HELL ANYTIME — BUT YOU HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO GO TO HEAVEN."



What do you do when the quarter is nearly over and you have extra Sunday School learner guides and magazines left over? The easy answer is just to throw all of it away, but maybe there are some more creative uses. Here are a few ideas:

- Take them to places where people have to wait. A doctor's office is an obvious place, as are hospital waiting rooms and bus and train stations. Maybe you could smuggle a few Sunday School quarterlies into an airline terminal. Hair salons and barber shops are good places to drop off the literature, along with the break-room at work, auto repair shop, crisis pregnancy center, blood donor center, and fire stations. Be creative!
- Leave them in places where people read while they're doing something else. "Accidentally" leave a copy at the coffee shop. Leave copies on the magazine rack at the fitness center and in the seat-back pocket on an airplane. Did I hear someone say the bathroom? One day, a group of Baptist women told me their husbands wouldn't read

GUEST OPINION:



Literature left over?

By David Francis
Sunday School Director
LifeWay Christian Resources

stuff from the church. I shared with them a wise truth: He'll read anything you leave in the bathroom.

- Hand out at church events. Give a copy of ParentLife to parents who come with their kids to Vacation Bible School family night or attend an Upward Basketball game or entrust their kids to your day-care, preschool, or Mother's Day Out program. Provide copies at the Harvest Festival. Give a copy of Living with Teenagers to parents dropping their students off for a week at youth camp. Provide copies of Christian Single through your divorce recovery ministry.
- Bundle with your ministry

efforts. Put a copy of a magazine or Bible study resource in the grocery bag of clients at your food pantry. Take copies to people you visit through homebound, nursing home, Meals on Wheels, and prison ministries.

- Share with a campus Baptist Student Ministry or Baptist Student Union. Is there a BSM/BSU on a nearby college campus? Ask if they might have use for some Bible study materials or magazines.

- Help out a struggling congregation or mission. Do you know of a church or mission that might rejoice to receive and/or reuse your leftovers? Why not ask?

- Send to military personnel and other adults who are

away. Some churches set up a special ministry for adults who are away. It really has no "attendance," just group leaders. One way to stay in touch — and exercise biblical encouragement — is to send Bible study material and magazines. An exciting LifeWay ministry to military personnel deployed abroad is LifeBox. In addition to treats and essentials, the boxes include LifeWay magazines. To learn more about this ministry, go to www.lifeway.com/lifebox. Some of these ideas, especially the last one, might cause you to observe, "Why should we just use leftover literature? We could use current magazines for these types of ministries, too!" Of course you could. Stamp or sticker the name of your church, class, or association on the back cover of the magazine. Keep it simple: "A gift from First Baptist Church," for example, and include your church's website address — and maybe, "Yes, you may take this home!"

Have you used leftover literature in a creative way? Do you have a testimony about such a ministry? Share it with us at sunday-school@lifeway.com.

Baptists jump hurdles for cyclone's victims

YANGON, Myanmar (BP) — In spite of obstacles that prevented a traditional disaster relief response, Southern Baptists have found creative ways to help victims of Cyclone Nargis in the two months since the storm unleashed its fury on Myanmar.

Perhaps a million people were left homeless by the storm, which roared across the Southeast Asian country May 3 with winds of up to 120 mph. An estimated 134,000 people are dead or missing. As many as 1.5 million were believed to be at risk for serious health problems in the storm's aftermath. Myanmar's military government tightly restricted the flow of relief supplies and aid workers into the hard-hit Irrawaddy Delta.

"We quickly saw that visas for volunteers to go into Myanmar were going to be very difficult, if not impossible, to get," said Francis Horton, who directs work in Central and South Asia for Baptist Global Response (BGR), a Southern Baptist international relief and development organization. "We then looked for other ways to assist in the effort and found several avenues to get help to the affected population in Myanmar."

The Southern Baptist relief initiatives have focused on partnerships with Myanmar believers and Christian organizations based in Southeast Asia that had less difficulty with access in Myanmar, Horton said.

"We discovered a cross-denominational coalition forming in Myanmar that was pooling the resources of the Christian community to achieve the greatest help possible to people in need," Horton said. "The Myanmar Christian Coalition for Cyclone Relief (MCCCR) represents the major denominations and ministries inside Myanmar working in partnership on the relief effort."

"With their coordination, we

should be able to see a systematic and cohesive long-term response to the disaster that will maximize resources in helping the victims and also result in a stronger standing for the Christian community in Myanmar."

Myanmar's Christian community rose to the challenge of ministry in the storm's aftermath, in spite of the suffering they were enduring themselves, Horton said.

"The churches in Myanmar did all they could from the very first day. Even though a number of churches themselves were destroyed, they began mobilizing their members to pack and distribute food-packets and other urgently required supplies to the victims," he said. "Much of this was concentrated in Yangon, but gradually they have been able to help in the coastal and delta areas as well, especially through their church networks of branch and outreach churches."

The initial Southern Baptist response included dispatching a team of "initial responders" who trained approximately 100 Christians from Myanmar in basic disaster response, water and sanitation, shelter, and spiritual care, Horton recounted.

Many of those believers returned to the delta to implement what they learned.

Southern Baptists also were able to allocate money from their World Hunger Fund to provide food packets for 10,000 people, ceramic water filters for 5,000 families, and 150,000 water purification tablets.

Horton said the MCCCR group now has outlined a six-facet master plan to address the range of recovery and development needs in the country:

- Reconstructing church buildings.
- Seven months of food kits for 110,000 families.
- Repairing and replacing houses.



CYCLONE DEVASTATION — Many residents of Myanmar's Irrawaddy Delta were forced to live without shelter from the elements after Cyclone Nargis destroyed their homes May 3. Southern Baptists have found ways to help victims of the cyclone despite restrictions on outside groups imposed by the country's military government. (BP photo)

- Providing family kits that include bedding, kitchen ware, some clothing and sanitary items.
- Helping children get back in school by providing supplies and uniforms.

- Assisting farmers and small business people in rebuilding their livelihoods.

The plan is broken down into projects to allow individuals and congregations in the United States to focus their attention on specific ways of helping Myanmar's people put their lives back together, Horton said.

"For example, Baptist Global Response is working closely with MCCCR to provide food packets for 500 families at a cost of \$100 per month for seven months," he said. "A livelihood project will provide six tractors, at a cost of \$1,800 each, that will benefit 1,000 families in 12 villages. Two acres of rice paddy seeds can be supplied for \$50. Diesel fuel for the tractors can be provided for \$18 per acre."

Baptist Global Response has not yet determined which, if any, of the other aspects of the MCCCR response plan it will be able to address, but those other aspects include:

- Assisting one child in primary school: \$26.80 (total number of children: 300,000).

- Assisting one child in middle school or high school: \$37 (200,000 children).

- Food for a family of four for one month: \$100 (110,000 families).

- Cooking utensils, clothing, toiletries, etc. for a family of four: \$86 (110,000 families).

- Assist a fisherman in rebuilding his livelihood: \$350 (30,000 fishermen).

- Helping a small business get started: \$150 (20,000 small businessmen).

- Materials for rebuilding one house: \$300 (total number not yet available).

- Materials for reconstructing a church building: \$13,400 (440 churches).

The total amount of Southern Baptist world hunger and relief funds committed to Myanmar exceeds one million dollars.

A Baptist Global Response team is on the ground in Southeast Asia until mid-July to assess progress on these projects, identify additional initiatives that may be needed, and encouraging the local congregations in their ministry to cyclone survivors.

Editor's note: Baptist Global Response is located on the Internet at gobgr.org.

Looking back

10 years ago

The old Baptist Sunday School Board is transformed into the new LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in a June 19 service in Nashville held to celebrate and dedicate the institution's new name.

20 years ago

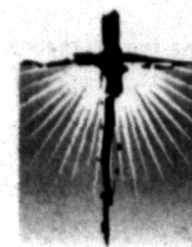
The Foreign Mission Board on July 12 votes without dissent to terminate the services of Michael E. Willett, missionary to Venezuela. Board president Keith Parks recommended Willett's dismissal because of "doctrinal ambiguity."

50 years ago

First Church, Vicksburg, holds its first service in its new building July 6 and conducts formal dedication services July 13. The new facilities include the complete church plant on a different location from its former building. Total expenditures for the new facility were over \$1,000,000.

No indictment

WASHINGTON (BP) — A Kansas grand jury has decided not to file charges against the country's best-known, late-term abortion doctor after a six-month investigation. A citizen-initiated grand jury in Sedgwick County adjourned July 2 without indicting George Tiller for performing illegal, late abortions, according to The Wichita Eagle. Tiller's clinic, Women's Health Care Services in Wichita, advertises on its website it has "more experience in late abortion services over 24 weeks than anyone else currently practicing in the Western Hemisphere, Europe and Australia." The grand jury said in a written statement it found "questionable late-term abortions" performed by Tiller but it did not receive enough evidence to indict him. The grand jury also said state law was confusing. The Eagle reported. "As the current law is written and interpreted by the Kansas Supreme Court, late-term abortions will continue for many circumstances that would seem, as a matter of common interpretation, not to meet the definition of 'substantial and irreversible impairment of a major bodily function,'" the grand jury's statement said, according to The Eagle. Mary Kay Culp, Kansas for Life's executive director, criticized District Attorney Nola Foulston for inadequate guidance to the grand jury. "The law doesn't need to be changed. The enforcers of the law need to be changed," she said, according to the newspaper. Tiller still faces a charge of failing to obtain an independent doctor's opinion before performing a late-term abortion. The Eagle reported.



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THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)

2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)

3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)

4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

BIBLIOCIPHER

By Charles Marx, 1932 - 2004
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WSJUJ NL E DUVNGR TMU
FNGJ NG WSJ LWUJJWL;
EZZ BMV NL HEUCJGJH,
WSJ QNUWS MT WSJ
ZEGH NL RMGJ).

NLENES WFJGWV-
TMKU:JZPJG

Clue: : V = Y

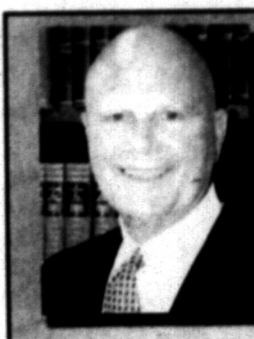
Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Six Twenty-eight

USELESS INFORMATION

It was July and I was traveling across the state one Sunday afternoon to speak at a special celebration service at one of our churches. As I drove down a narrow, blacktopped road, a farm to market road I guess, I came to a small bridge across a creek. I happened to notice a sign just before I got to the bridge itself. It was one of those signs that said something to the effect, "WARNING — BRIDGE MAY ICE OVER IN COLD WEATHER." I glanced down at my car thermometer giving the outside temperature and it said 100 degrees. I crossed over the bridge and rode along wondering how many of those signs had been placed on bridge crossings all across the state. There must be thousands and thousands of them. I thought how useless they are in summer circumstances.

After seeing that sign and thinking about the heat and humidity of July, I just continued to watch as I drove along and saw one sign after another after another, "WARNING — BRIDGE MAY ICE OVER IN COLD WEATHER." I am not opposed to the sign. In fact, I am thankful for the signs and know that there have been times in January and February that I have been driving down the road, noticed one of those signs, wondered if the bridge I was about to cross had an ice patch on it, and slowed down to be on the safe side. I am thankful for the sign, but the information it provides is not particularly pertinent or thought provoking when the pavement is so hot it will fry an egg.

I also thought about how sometimes Christians are guilty of putting out our information at times and places when it is not all together meaningful. Sometimes all of us are probably guilty of wanting to tell a person how they need to change their life and lifestyle before we have told them about the Lifechanger. Even if we wanted them to change and even if they wanted to change, it is not going to happen apart from the revolutionary, wonderful power of Jesus.



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

I was talking to one of our fine pastors and he was telling me about a couple who needed help and came to their church. They were in a desperate condition and needed food. As the pastor visited with them, he discovered that the man and woman who lived together in the community were not married. Just visiting with them he gently and lovingly asked them if they had thought about getting married. The woman responded that she was not going to get married. The guy she had been married to before beat her all of the time and she was not about to do that again. The man was not excited about getting married either and so they just lived together and now lived together in their need and hunger. The pastor told them that the church was going to help them. The ladies of the church got busy and started putting together several sacks full of groceries to help the hungry couple.

While they were getting the food ready the pastor kept visiting with them and started to talk to them about their spiritual condition. He shared with them the love of Jesus and the wonderful power of Christ to forgive and to give direction and meaning to life. Both the man and the woman listened intently and were receptive to the loving message presented by the pastor. When he asked if they would like to receive Christ as Savior, both of them said, "Yes!" Both of them prayed a simple, but wonderfully sincere prayer asking Jesus to come into their heart and both of them were saved. The food was sacked up and ready to go, but before they left, the pastor told them that if he had just given them a loaf of bread it would have been gone in a day or two and they would be back in great need, but now they would go with the Bread of Life to sustain them forever with whatever they would face.

I suppose for some of us the tendency would be to hold up a sign that says, "If you are going to live together, you need to be married," and the sign would be true, but both of them had a far greater need than just getting married or just getting some sacks of food. It was the wise preacher who let them know what their greatest need in life was.

"WARNING — BRIDGE MAY ICE OVER IN COLD WEATHER" is pretty much useless information unless the temperature is around 32 degrees or unless it is drizzling, sleeting, or snowing, but the spiritual truth that is unchanging is that regardless whether you are married, single, living together, or searching for a mate, Jesus can make a difference in whatever you face. He is always the right answer and has the right information for the crises in life.

It is easy in the Christian life to get caught up in the habit of going around putting up signs — don't go here, don't do that, don't say this, and don't drink that. You can lose sight of the fact that ultimately the only sign that will make a difference in a life today and forever are the words spoken by Jesus when He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me" (John 14:6).

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.

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ASSOCIATE PASTOR FOR YOUTH AND Family Ministry. FBC, Arkadelphia, Arkansas, is receiving resumes for this position through August 15, 2008. The position description can be viewed at the website: www.fbcark.org. Resumes and letters of introduction can be emailed to fbca1@ioccc.com or mailed to FBC, 623 Pine Street, Arkadelphia, Arkansas 71923.

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A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE CHRISTIAN ACTION COMMISSION OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION • VOLUME 8 • ISSUE 7

The Path of Lady Liberty

By Rob Chambers

Miss. Baptist Christian Action Commission

The United States of America just celebrated her 232nd anniversary of independence from Great Britain. On July 2, 1776, the Second Continental Congress passed a resolution on independence from Britain and two days later agreed upon a statement known as the Declaration of Independence explaining this legal separation. Many of the Founding Fathers of America and their documents support the establishment of this nation on a foundation of faith in God.

John Adams was one of the founders and also a member of the Committee of Five responsible for presenting to Congress a draft of the Declaration of Independence. Before Congress passed it, Adams wrote his wife, Abigail, about America's independence. In this letter he said the nation's freedom "will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. I am apt to believe that it will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. It ought to be commemorated as the day



Chambers

of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty." Adams believed that God Almighty - El Shaddai - is the One to be praised for this new independence.

America, by the Declaration of Independence, makes the bold statement that "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." One's own conscience bears witness to the fact that God the Creator created all of humanity with inherent rights that cannot be taken away from any human being. Since these rights are given by the Creator, then humanity as the beneficiary of these rights is subject to the Creator who declared these rights.

God's law governs these rights, but His law has been increasingly replaced with the idea of personal autonomy. Individual

autonomy basically says, "I have rights and I can do what I want regardless of what others think and say, God included. I am my own authority."

The result has been a suppression of religious expression as only allowable in the personal realm - not out in public. This is in direct opposition to what the Founding Fathers and Framers of the U.S. Constitution intended. Faith in God is a public matter, and the Founding Fathers guaranteed this freedom in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Christians in America have constitutional protection from the government imposing laws against religious expression in both public and private realms.

Benjamin Franklin in a speech before the Constitutional Convention said, "I've lived, Sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing Proofs I see of this Truth - That God governs in the Affairs of Men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his Notice, is it probable that an Empire can rise without his Aid? We have been assured, Sir, in the

Sacred Writings, that except the Lord build the House they labor in vain who build it. I firmly believe this - and I also believe that without his concurring Aid, we shall succeed in this political Building no better than the Builders of Babel: We shall be divided by our little partial local interests; our Projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a Reproach and Bye word down to future Ages."

If Americans continue seeking themselves as their own god, then America is in no better position than Babel. Lady Liberty has been turning toward being a debauched country for quite some time, and America will face judgment lest she repent and God relents.

The church ought to follow the example of King Josiah who repented and led the people of Judah in repentance. The people followed him, and God withheld judgment for a season. So, "let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us" (Heb 12:1)

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MS POSITIONS

FBC OF EUPORA, MISS. IS NOW accepting resumes for the position of youth minister. Send resumes to fbcceyouth@gmail.com. or FBC-Search, P.O. Box 268, Eupora, MS 39744.

FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC. Parkview Baptist Church, Greenville, Miss., is seeking a full-time minister of music. Please send resume to personnel committee, 712 McAllister St., Greenville, MS 38701, or email to parkviewp@bellsouth.net.

LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH IN Flowood, one of the fastest growing cities in MS desires to fill the positions of Music, Education and Youth. Please send resume to Search Committee, 5199 Lakeland Dr., Flowood, MS 39232. Fax 601-992-4242 or email office@lbcflowood.org.

IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH IN Vicksburg, Miss., seeking individual for full-time Minister of Music. Please send resume to Immanuel Baptist Church, attn: personnel committee, 6949 Hwy 61 South, Vicksburg, MS 39180. Or email to IBC_personnel@yahoo.com or contact Michael Bull at 601-218-5325.

PELAHATCHIE BAPTIST CHURCH IS seeking a part-time Minister of Music for Worship Services, Adult, youth, and children's choirs. Please forward resume to the Pelahatchie Baptist Church, search committee, P O Box 876, Pelahatchie, MS 39145, attn: Due McKinion. Email: due@rankincounty.org.

NEW ORLEANS (Special) - The three Mississippi extension center locations of New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) will offer a full slate of classes during the Fall 2008 semester

Graduate students in Mississippi have two options for extension center study: the Clinton Extension Center on the campus of Mississippi College in Clinton and the North Mississippi Center on the campus of Blue Mountain College in Blue Mountain. Undergraduate students will meet at Broadmoor Church in Madison.

Students may pursue either the master of divinity or the master of arts in Christian education degrees at the Clinton Center. The master of divinity degree is available at the North Mississippi Center.

Undergraduate students in Mississippi who are pursuing the associate in Christian ministry degree may take classes at the Jackson Center, located at Broadmoor Church.

Returning students register for fall classes online at nobts.edu. Online registration is currently open and closes on Aug. 15.

New student orientation and registration will take place at the Clinton, North Mississippi, and Jackson extension centers on Aug. 11. Classes begin one week later on Aug. 18.

The Clinton Extension Center continues to offer two sets of classes (or cycles) for graduate students. For specific information regarding the two class cycles offered in

Clinton, go online to www.nobts.edu/extensions/clinton.html.

For Southern Baptists, graduate classes are \$170 per semester hour in addition to the \$75 resource fee. Non-SBC students pay \$230 per semester hour. For more information, contact Program Director Ron Mitchell at (662) 587-1770, or by email at jrmitchell43@hotmail.com.

Undergraduate tuition is \$175 per semester hour for Southern Baptists in addition to the \$75 resource fee. Non-SBC students pay \$235 per semester hour.

For more information regarding the Jackson extension center, contact director Julius Thompson at (601) 856-4341 or by email at thompson.julius@worldnet.att.net.

Iranian Christians jailed for apostasy

ISTANBUL (BP) - Iranian authorities have held two converts to Christianity in the southern city of Shiraz for eight weeks on suspicion of "apostasy," or leaving Islam. In Iran, apostasy is a crime that can be punishable by death.

Compass Direct News, which provides reports on Christians worldwide who are persecuted for their faith, reported on July 9 that Mahmood Matin, age 52, and Arash Bandari, age 44, have been imprisoned in a secret police detention center known by its address, Sepah Street 100, since their arrest May 15 in Shiraz, a city of more than 1.75 million people.

Matin's wife was able to speak with him for five minutes during a June 24 visit as officials listened in, a source told Compass Direct News. Matin, seated in a dimly lit room behind a glass window, told his wife that there had been a misunderstanding and he could not teach Christianity anymore.

"They are pushing me to tell them that I am connected to a church outside [Iran] and that I am receiving a salary, but I told them that I am doing it on my own," Matin told his wife, according to a source who requested anonymity for security reasons.

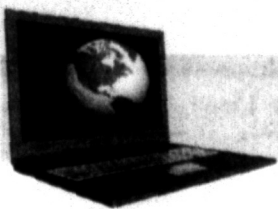
Despite Matin's claims that he was being well treated, his wife told the source she

believed otherwise. "He was just trying to make me calm; that's what I could see, because he's my husband and I know his face," Matin's wife said, according to the source.

Matin was not aware where he was being held until his wife told him during the visit, the source reported. The June 24 meeting was the first and only face-to-face contact Matin's family has had with him since his arrest in May. His wife traveled 17 hours by bus from her home in Tehran to visit her jailed husband.

He has had no further contact with his wife and three children, ages 22, 18, and 12, since the June 24 jail visit.

Visit us online at www.mbc.org to learn about all Mississippi Baptist mission opportunities.



JUST FOR THE RECORD



2. Harmony Church, Louisville



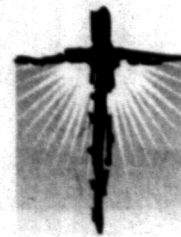
3. Robbins recognition, Bunker Hill Church



4. Baby dedication, Fellowship Church, State Line



5. First Church, Byram



MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

1. Members from Janice Church, Beaumont Church, Good Hope Church, Seminary Church, and First Church, Richton, all assisted in VBS and Bible Camps at Kirkwood Church, Bozeman, Montana, June 23 - 26. Bob Goolsby, AMD.
2. Harmony Church, Louisville, recently honored 11 couples who had been married 50 years or more with a cookout and a plaque. Shown are the participants.
3. Bunker Hill Church, Columbia, recognized Imogene Robbins for sixty years of service in Vacation Bible School. She began working at Calvary Church, New Orleans, and began serving at Bunker Hill in 1959. Shown is pastor Randy Gardner and Robbins.
4. Fellowship Church, State Line, held a baby dedication May 18. Shown is Jeff Rimes and the two families.
5. First Church, Byram's adult choir and orchestra presented a special program honoring God and country, directed by Phil Odom. Shown are the participants.
6. Clarke - Venable Church, Decatur, honored interim music director Tom Carson June 29 with a reception. Shown are Carson, Brenda Carson, Jennifer, Jeremy, Chris, Wendy Carson, and pastor Mark Vincent.
7. Youth and children from Ingomar Church, New Albany, recently traveled to Atlanta and the Erwin Brown Training Center, Hernando, for camps, respectively. Shown are the participants.
8. McBee Church, Columbus, ordained Glenn Hartley and James Beasley as deacons June 1. Shown are Hartley, pastor Jim Ray, and Beasley.



6. Carson reception, Clarke - Venable Church



7a. Youth, Ingomar Church, New Albany



7b. Children, Ingomar Church, New Albany



8. Ordination, McBee Church, Columbus

JUST FOR THE RECORD



9a. Youth and children's drillers, Society Hill Church



9b. Bible Buddies, Society Hill Church

9. **Society Hill Church, Oakvale**, recognizes its Bible Buddies and youth and children's Bible drillers. Bible Buddies: Casondra Waldon (leader), Sarah Cook, Brandon Waldon, Kayleigh Pierce, Nicole Pierce, Alexandria Williamson, and Bradley Williamson. Youth and children's drillers: Hope Cook, Luke Coleman, Carrie Dyess, and Caleb Coleman.

10. **Zion Hill Church, Mississippi Association**, recently recognized John Wilson (right) upon his graduation from the University of Southern Mississippi and for playing the drums in the worship service. Shown are Wilson and Gary Sterling.

11. **Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto**, recognized Christine Smith as the oldest mother on Mother's Day. Shown is Smith and pastor Trent Bilbo.

12. GAs from **Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto**, recently attended Mission Madness Day. Shown are the participants.



10. Wilson recognition



11. Smith recognition



12. GAs, Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOLS



3. Liberty Church, Noxapater



5. Spangle Banner Church, Pace

1. **Hebron Church, Panola**: July 21-25, 9 a.m. - 11:30 a.m..

2. **Cold Springs Church, Collins**: First week in June; \$461.50 collected for the Memorial to the Missing.

3. **Liberty Church, Noxapater**: Enrollment, 110; average attendance, 90; seven professions of faith. Shown are the participants.

4. **Blythe Creek Church, Choctaw Association**: June 8-12; enrollment, 74; average attendance, 38, with two professions of faith. Offering of \$412 was given to the Baptist Children's Village.

5. **Spangle Banner Church, Pace**: June 9 - 13, which included an outdoor baptism of two new believers. Shown is one of the baptisms.

6. **Tuscola Church, Leake Association**: June 17 - 21, with an average attendance of 19 and missions offering of \$264. Shown are the participants.

7. **North Carrollton Church, North Carrollton**: Two professions of faith. Shown are the participants.



6. Tuscola Church, Leake Association



7. North Carrollton Church, North Carrollton

REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

1. **Terry's Creek Church, Magnolia:** Revival, July 20 - 23; Sun., Sunday School, 10 a.m., followed by worship, noon lunch, and afternoon service; Mon. and Wed., 7 p.m.; Tues., 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Steve Cirlot, speaker; Glen and Brenda Roberts, music; Todd Sumrall, pastor.
2. **Pleasant Grove Church, Brookhaven:** Revival, July 20 - 25; Sun., Sunday School, 10 a.m., followed by worship and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Fri., 7 p.m.; Greg Warnock, speaker; Tim King, music; Kent Cochran, pastor.
3. **Bethel Church, Water Valley:** Revival, July 20 - 23; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Gene Henderson, speaker; Steve Frederick, music.
4. **Harmony Church, Louisville:** Revival, July 27 - 31; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; David Keene, speaker; David Blackwell, music.
5. **Bethel Church, Brandon:** Revival, July 20 - 23; Sun., 8:45 and 11 a.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Tues., youth night; Billy Dowdy, speaker; Tim Temple, music.
6. **Jerusalem Church, Kosciusko:** Revival, July 20 - 23; Sun., Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., followed by worship and covered dish lunch, and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7:30 p.m.; James Young, speaker; Rita Pettit, music; Johnny Parks, pastor.
7. **Brandon Church, Brandon:** One-day revival, July 27; worship, 9 and 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; former SBC president Bobby Welch, speaker.
8. **Calvary Church, Carroll County:** Revival, July 27 - 30; Sun., 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. nightly; Terry Corley, speaker; Bobby Mims, music.
9. **West Drew, Drew:** Homecoming and revival, July 20 - 23; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by lunch and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Artie Nute, speaker; Richard Webster, music.

STAFF CHANGES

1. **Prentiss Church, Prentiss** has called Benjamin James as pastor, effective June 15. James comes with his wife Laura Leigh. Shown are the James.
2. **McBee Church, Columbus,** has called Joe Fondren as youth director effective June 1. Shown are pastor Jim Ray and Fondren.



1. James family



2. Ray and Fondren

3. **First Church, Flora,** has called Paul Brashier as pastor, effective July 13. A community welcome celebration and reception will be held July 27, 5 p.m. Brashier is a native of Lucedale, and holds degrees from Mississippi College and New Orleans Seminary. He comes from Parkway Church, Tupelo.
4. **Beacon Street Church, Philadelphia,** has called Wayne Hill as pastor effective June 1. He has served churches in Winston, Kemper, and Neshoba counties. Shown are Hill and his wife Joyce.



4. The Hills



5. The Fondrens

5. **Blythe Creek Church, Choctaw Association,** has called Mike Fondren, Sr., as pastor effective June 15. Fondren has served churches in Monroe, Newton, and Golden Triangle associations. Shown are Fondren, wife Edna, and children Ellen and Mitch.

COLLEGE NEWS

1. **William Carey University** will host the annual Survival Weekend August 22 through August 24 on the Hattiesburg campus. The cost of Survival Weekend is \$35 and includes meals, events and a t-shirt. For more information or to register early, call 601-318-6161 or 800-962-5991, ext. 161 or visit www.wmcarey.edu.
2. The Office of Continuing Education at **Mississippi College** is offering a course to assist individuals who are preparing to take the Law School Admission Test (LSAT). The course offers 12 instructional hours of review and is scheduled to begin Sept. 11 and conclude on Sept. 18. The course is scheduled from 6 - 10 p.m. each evening. The review cost is \$249. Registration deadline is August 25. For a registration form or more information, you may call 601.925.3265, or visit the website at www.mc.edu/continuing.
3. The Office of Continuing Education at **Mississippi College** is offering a course to assist individuals who are preparing to take the GRE Admissions Test. The course offers 12 instructional hours of review and is scheduled as a three-night course. The course is scheduled: August 26, 28, and September 2, from 6 - 10 p.m. each evening. The review cost is \$249. Registration deadline is August 11. For a registration form or more information, please call 601.925.3265, or visit the website: www.mc.edu/continuing.

Mississippi Baptists

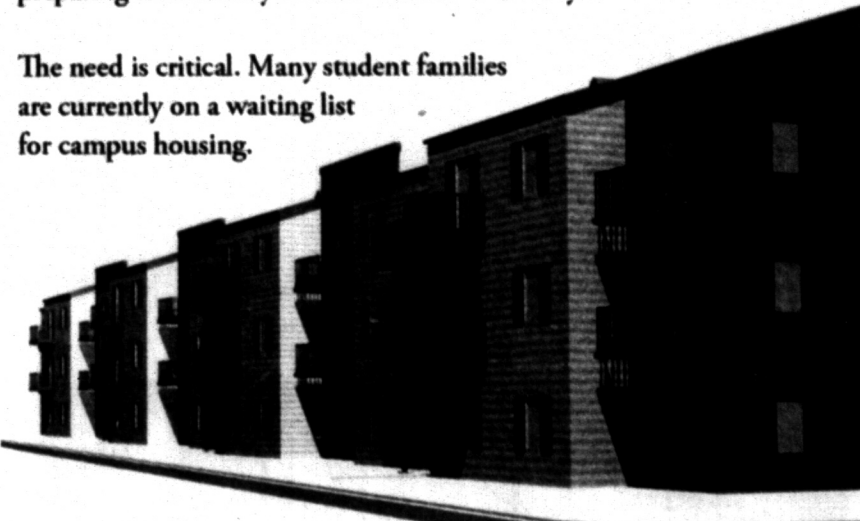
Giving Back to New Orleans Seminary

The Mississippi Manor Project at NOBTS

The Mississippi Manor Project was launched by a group of Baptists in Picayune and is designed to provide funding for a new apartment complex at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Since Hurricane Katrina, when 92 campus apartments were damaged beyond repair, the seminary has faced a housing shortage. Mississippi Manor will provide 36 two-bedroom apartments for student families preparing for ministry at New Orleans Seminary.

The need is critical. Many student families are currently on a waiting list for campus housing.

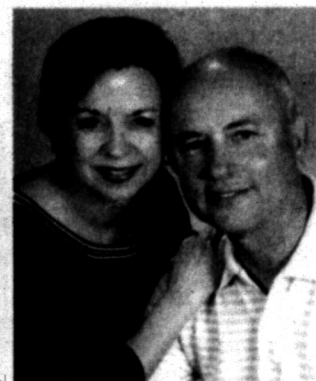


Project Details

- Cost of Construction: \$5 million
- Construction time: 9 months
- Sponsor an apartment: \$139,000
- Building Area: 34,050 SF
- Apartment Size: 830 SF

Can you help meet this critical need?

For more information about Mississippi Manor or to give to the project, contact Tom Boone in Picayune 1-800.426.1886 or msnobts.bellsouth.net



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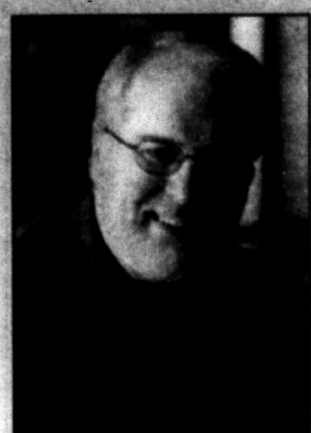
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JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Smithville Church youth



DON PIPER

author of 90 Minutes in Heaven
will be at
North Greenwood Baptist Church

**Tuesday, July 29th and
Wednesday, July 30th.**

The time will be 7:00 p.m. each evening.
Nursery will be provided. Book signing will follow
each evening.

615 Grand Boulevard

For more information, call 662-453-2801.

Love offering to be received.

1. The youth of **Smithville Church, Smithville**, attended Student Life at the Beach in Myrtle Beach June 9 - 13. Shown are the participants.

2. The kindergarten of **First Church, Taylorsville**, recently celebrated 25 years of service by recognizing past and present teachers. Shown are some of the students.

3. **Oak Grove Church, Shubuta**, ordained Andy Cochran and Gary Hearn as deacons May 28. Shown are pastor Terry Irby, Cochran, Hearn, and AMD Grady Crowell.

4. The youth from **Pearl Valley Church, Wesson**, cooked for Katrina volunteers at First Church, Bay St. Louis, June 21 - 28. Shown are the participants.

5. **Plainway Church, Laurel**, celebrated its 58th homecoming anniversary Apr. 6. The church presented plaques of appreciation for years of service to (from left) Sylvia Hill, Linda Jefcoat, Rachel Schoen, and Greg Jones, and in separate photo, Jerry Pippen.



2. First Church, Taylorsville, kindergarten



3. Deacon ordination, Oak Grove Church



4. Youth, Pearl Valley Church, Wesson



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Branson Christmas- November 17-21

Smoky Mountain Christmas- December 1-6

Nashville Country Christmas- December 15-18

Call soon before Registration Deadlines or seats run out



5a. Plainway Church recognitions



5b. Plainway Church recognitions

JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Baby dedication, N. Carrollton Church



2. Bible drillers, New Heights Church



3. Youth, River Bend Church



4. Baby dedication, Steele Church

1. **N. Carrollton Church, N. Carrollton**, held a baby dedication June 22. Shown are the participants.

2. **New Heights Church, Summit**, recognizes its youth and children's Bible drillers. Shown are the participants.

3. The youth of **River Bend Church, Aberdeen**, attended MissionFuge at Mississippi College June 30 - July 5. Shown are the participants.

4. **Steele Church, Forest**, recently held a baby dedication. Shown are Dale, Kim, and Ashlyn Round and pastor Reggie Williams.

5. The youth of **Sunrise Church, Petal**, recently participated in a mission trip to Dallas, Tex. Shown are the participants.

6. The RAs of **First Church, Runnelstown**, recently participated in a car race at the church. Shown are first place winners Taylor Shows and Tyler Freeman. Lance Arnold and Wyatt Freeman won second place; and Eric Holmes and Andrew Ferguson won third place.

7. The youth of **Woodland Hills Church, Jackson**, recently held a VBS with Eskimo 'children' in Noorvik, Alaska, in the Artic Circle. Woodland Hills was the first volunteer mission team to go by bush plane to the Artic village to do VBS. Shown are the participants.

8. **Benoit Church, Benoit**, along with the Benoit Methodist and Presbyterian churches recently held a mother-daughter tea. Shown are participants Sue Ellen Pinnix, Pam Ikerd, and Searcy Pinnix.



5. Youth, Sunrise Church



6. RA racers, First Church, Runnelstown



7. Youth, Woodland Hills church



8. Mother-Daughter Tea, Benoit



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BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

What's Up with Christ Coming Down?

Revelation 19:6-9, 11-16, 19-21

By Janice H. Fortenberry

Our son Ken is profoundly and severely mentally retarded. Since 1990 he has lived in a private Catholic facility in Louisiana. When we visit, telling him goodbye is gut-wrenching for us and for him. Though he can walk and do simple tasks, he is severely language impaired. He can understand what's said to him, but his ability to express himself is limited to a few sounds only those familiar to him can understand. Too, he has little functional vision.

When we are there for a two-day visit, it's important to help him understand that, though we are spending the night at a motel, we will be back the next morning. We have to get his attention and repeat over and over again that we are not leaving and are, in

fact, coming back the next day. Once he understands us, I can see a calm come over his face.

Revelation is divided into the following sections: (1) The prologue (1:1-8) and John's vision of the glorified Christ (1:9-18); (2) The letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor (2:1-3:22); and (3) according to the futurist interpretation, John's vision of Heaven (4:1-5:14); the great tribulation (6:1-18:24); the return of Christ (19:1-21); the millennium (20:1-10); the final judgment (20:11-15); and the establishment of a new heaven and a new earth (21:1-22:21).

Today's lesson focuses on the triumphant return of Jesus Christ to earth during the latter years of the tribulation (19:6-21). According to many scholars, the tribulation is the seven year peri-



Fortenberry

od following the Rapture, the removal of the church from the earth (John 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). You will recall that it's during the last half of the tribulation that the Antichrist emerges and establishes his one-world reign.

Jesus' return is the answer to Christians' prayers throughout the centuries—the utter defeat of evil, the casting of Satan and his followers into a lake of burning fire and the meting out of perfect justice for all the wrongs experienced by God's people throughout the ages.

Looking at today's focal passages, we are told we will be claimed as Christ's own (19:6-9). John uses the metaphor of Hebrew weddings. The redeemed (the church) is the bride and Christ is the groom. According to Hebrew tradition, weddings consisted of three parts: the betrothal, the presentation and the ceremony feast and consummation. Betrothals were often arranged at childhood. If we are saved, we were

selected to be his bride before earthly time began.

"Before the world was created, God had Christ choose us to live with him and to be his holy and innocent and loving people." (Eph. 1:4 CEV)

The presentation (days of festivities prior to the ceremony) is symbolic of the rapture (John 14:1-3; Thess. 4:13-18). The ceremony feast and the consummation of the marriage of Jesus and his church marks the establishment of a new heaven and a new earth (21:2, 9-10).

Upon his return, Christ will also assert his authority as King of Kings and Lord of Lords and dispense justice (19:11-16). Christ will crush the Antichrist and all the armies marching against Israel. The Antichrist and his inner circle will be cast alive into a lake of burning sulfur (19:20) and the massive enemy armies will be destroyed by the sword coming from Christ's mouth in the battle of Armageddon (19:21).

While Revelation records John's vision of the end times, we should take comfort that Christ is as victorious today as long as we are truly His obedient

children. He claims us, conquers evil around us and crushes those who oppose us. Granted, there are periods when His time is not ours—times when it appears the world is getting the best of us, times when those who oppose righteousness appear to be getting ahead rather than "getting theirs." It's during these periods that we are most vulnerable to discouragement and disillusionment.

When these times come (and they do), we are wise to remember the words of Paul: "If God is on our side, can anyone be against us?" (Rom. 8:31 CEV)

Even though he can't say it, our son's face reflects a comfort whenever he understands that his dad and I are not leaving but will be back the next day for another visit. How much greater should our peace and joy be once we grasp the fullness of the promise that Christ will, in fact, return one day triumphantly to establish a new heaven and new earth with His chosen as His bride.

Fortenberry is a member of First Church, McComb.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Galatia: Facing Troubles

Acts 14:1-4, 11-15a, 18-23

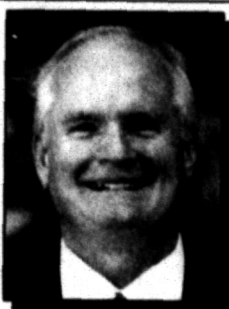
By W. Wayne VanHorn

The background for this week's lesson is Acts 13-14, which contains Paul and Barnabas's first missionary journey. Several key aspects of how to persevere when facing troubles emerge from these verses. First, Paul, Barnabas, and the Church at Antioch were sensitive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Second, Paul and Barnabas left an established church to take the Gospel to frontier areas. Third, they began their ministry in each new city by first teaching in the synagogues where they were certain to find people acquainted with the Scriptures. Fourth, they encountered many obstacles like Elymas the false prophet (Acts 13:6-11). Fifth, they were able to lead important people to believe like Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:12). Sixth, they taught that Jesus was the culmination of the salvation history

that began with Israel's bondage in Egypt. Seventh, they incurred the wrath of jealous religious leaders. Eighth, they responded to the criticism of Jewish religious leaders by taking the Gospel to the Gentiles. Finally, they kept moving, preaching, and sharing Christ. They were filled with the Spirit and with great joy (Acts 13:52).

1. Rejection and Dependence (Acts 14:1-4)

When Paul and Barnabas shared the Gospel in the Galatian city of Iconium, they had mixed results. Many people believed, both Jewish and Gentile; but unbelieving Jews stirred up other Gentiles against them. The key verse is 14:3. In spite of opposition, Paul and Barnabas, depending on God, "spent considerable time there speaking boldly for the Lord" (NIV). The importance of their mission was greater than the degree of their persecution.



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Thus they persevered. However, when the opposition sought to stone them, they moved on to other cities.

2. Misconception and Explanation (Acts 14:11-15a, 18)

As a result of a healing miracle, the people addressed Paul and Barnabas as gods. Interestingly, they called Barnabas Zeus, the chief Greek god; they called Paul Hermes, the herald of Zeus, noted for persuasion and diplomacy among other things. These ascriptions are attributed to the fact that Paul did most of the speaking (Acts 14:12). Some people would revel in this kind of attention and glory, but true representatives of Christ always divert such accolades to the one who deserves them, Jesus. Thus Paul and Barnabas tore their garments in humility and invited the people to turn to the living God (Acts 14:14-15).

I remember praying with Marlyn Fortenberry just before he presented a dramatic monologue as the Apostle Peter. Marlyn, a seventy year old

church member, would dress in biblical garb, paste a beard to his chin, and then tell the people about Jesus as if he was Peter himself. He asked me to pray that his presentation of the Gospel would not be received as a performance. Marlyn was a humble believer who sought always to give glory to Jesus.

3. Persecution and Faithfulness (Acts 14:19-21)

The Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who caused Paul and Barnabas so much misery, followed them to Lystra and stirred up trouble there as well. Paul was stoned and left for dead, but God delivered him to preach another day. He and Barnabas carried the Gospel to the city of Derbe and then retraced their steps to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. Though they faced opposition and persecution because of their stance for Christ, Paul and Barnabas were faithful to their God-given mission of sharing the Gospel in frontier cities.

4. Recognition and Acceptance (Acts 14:22-23)

Paul and Barnabas put the welfare of the new churches above their own personal safety. They risked opposition, persecu-

tion, and stoning in order to establish the new communities of faith. First, they strengthened the souls of the disciples. Next, they exhorted these new converts to continue in the faith even when faced with persecution. Finally, they appointed elders to serve as guardians and leaders of the churches. The term elder derives from the Greek work presbuteros, referring to some one of sufficient age as to be wise and discerning in matters related to church governance and dealing with people. Baptists traditionally equated elders with pastors.

Christians who seek to live for God and to witness about Jesus will encounter persecution today as well. Paul and Barnabas set a noble example for us to follow by showing us how to persevere in times of trouble. Modern believers can persevere through troubles that arise in response to their faith in Jesus Christ. The key to perseverance is the same for us as it was for Paul and Barnabas, start by listening to and following the Holy Spirit.

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The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

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THE BAPTIST
Record

Vols fill missions needs in storm-struck Nicaragua

PUERTO CABEZAS, Nicaragua (BP)—When Marie Davidson heard Jim and Viola Palmer talk about their ministry among the Miskito people of Nicaragua, she was deeply moved. When she heard more than a year later that Hurricane Felix was bearing down on the Miskito Coast with 160-mph winds, her thoughts immediately leaped to the Palmers and their people group.

"My initial contact about the Miskito people group was when I met the Palmers two years ago at Ridgecrest," said Davidson, who is a member of Immanuel Church in Princeton, W.Va. "Their stories about the Miskito people really touched me. I just had them on my heart and mind. When I saw Hurricane Felix was headed for the Miskito Coast, my first thought was for these people I had been praying for."

Davidson still didn't realize, however, that the Lord had much more in mind than her praying for the Miskito people.

She drove over to Fellowship Church in Princeton to participate in a regular monthly mission project that packages food for needy people in various places around the world. When she arrived, she was excited to learn the boxes packed that evening were headed to Nicaragua.

"I asked the pastor, Lyle Mullins, if he was familiar with the Palmers and he said, 'Oh, that's who is getting this distribution,'" Davidson recalled. "I could pray for the Miskito people as I packaged the food! It was like the Lord kept bringing me back to the Miskito people."

The Miskito people were on Ken Owens' heart too. Owens, pastor of Edgemont Church in Bluefield, W.Va., had been encouraging churches in the association to participate in overseas missions projects, not just to give and pray for them.

"I've had the good fortune over the last several years to be able to go on trips to China, the Philippines, Romania, and Cuba," said Owens, who also serves as the disaster relief director for Mountain State Baptist Association in Princeton. "I had been trying to get our association involved in hands-on missions, rather than just talking about it."

Owens had hoped to organize another trip to Cuba, where he had helped a volunteer team work on a church building in 2007, but that project didn't materialize.

"Then I got an e-mail from Baptist Global Response that said teams were needed to go to Nicaragua. I thought I didn't have a lot of time to put together another trip, but I downloaded the information about the project and took it to my associational council meeting."

Owens wasn't convinced a team could be put together on such short notice, but when he arrived at the meeting, he handed the Nicaragua material to Davidson, who is the Woman's Missionary Union director for the association and had worked with him on a mission trip in 2006. He was stunned and a little worried when she broke into tears.

"When Marie saw it, she began to weep," Owens recalled. "She said, 'I've been praying for the Miskito people for the last two years. This must be where God wants us to go.'"

Encouraged by that confirmation, Owens issued a call for volunteers to help rebuild homes in Nicaragua destroyed by Hurricane Felix. "I put out an appeal to our association to field a team and was pleasantly surprised that I was able to put together a full team of 12 pretty quickly," he recalled. "We just waited for God to work and all the details came together."

Davidson and Jennie Hughes, who helped pack the food at Fellowship Church, were among those who joined the team.

For a week in mid-May, the volunteers in Nicaragua followed the pattern established by other teams that had worked among the Miskito since the storm: camping in tents and using lumber salvaged from storm-damaged trees to help build 75 small houses in six months.

"It was a great experience," Owens said. "We had about six people on the team who had never been outside the country. We were able to take two 18-year-olds and a 16-year-old, and they spent their lunch hour every day playing ball with the local kids. They came away with the sense that there



PUTTING IT TOGETHER — Mississippians Tom Kilpatrick (left), his wife Martha, and Jeff Greenway make benches for a congregation in Santa Rosa, Nicaragua, during a volunteer project earlier this year to assist families whose homes were destroyed last fall by Hurricane Felix. (BP photo courtesy of Larry McKay)

are some people in the world who have nothing and how privileged and honored we are to have all the things we have.

"That was wonderful to me because we need to actively involve young people in ministry in a place that would help them see there's another world out there and why missions is so important," he continued. "If we don't get young people involved in missions, missions doesn't have much of a future."

The volunteer team worked through the week, finishing a house begun by a previous team and putting up two more houses themselves. The local pastor had said that, if time allowed, he had some work on his house that needed to be done too.

When Davidson heard the team was going to work inside the pastor's

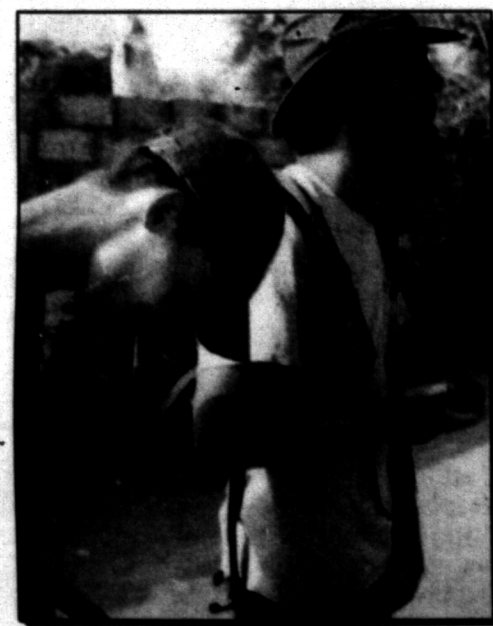
house, she volunteered to help. She hadn't been inside any of the occupied houses in the village and was curious to see how people there lived.

She wasn't prepared for what she saw, however. As they entered the main room of the little house, she noticed a box sitting under a bed. On the side was a label that read, "Feed the Children, Heaven Sent Ministries, Princeton, W.V."

It was one of the boxes she and her friends back home had packed in the days after the storm.

"Our ladies were just absolutely taken aback," Owens said. "Here's a box they may have packed, sitting in the house! God always does that. Every mission trip I have been on, God always affirms in some way, 'This is where I wanted you to be.'"

Bikes, GPS helping map African ministry opportunities



MAPPING FOR MINISTRY — Marking the location of a village with a Global Positioning System handheld device, Hands On missionaries Jed Richards of St. Louis (right) and teammate Andrew Smith of Andover, Kn., hope their research can help future missionaries bring the Gospel to this part of rural Senegal. Richards and Smith, students at Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., are part of the International Mission Board's Hands On program. (BP photo)

SENEGAL, West Africa (BP) — Their bikes lie nearby as the short-term missionaries sleep in their tents. Beside them are enough supplies to last a week in the African bush: cans of Spam for when they can't find local food, patches for their tires when they spring a leak — and their Bibles, reminders of why they're here in the first place.

As the sun rises, Jed Richards, age 21, and Andrew Smith, age 22, prepare for another tough day of biking. These Hands On workers are using the Global Positioning System (GPS) to map unmarked villages in southern Senegal.

Hands On is an International Mission Board program that places young people like Richards and Smith in high-impact ministries in several African countries. The two spent a semester from

Midwestern Seminary and College in Kansas City, Mo., on this mission.

Richards reads out loud the GPS coordinates of a village while Smith writes down the numbers. The information they gather will help other missionaries create strategies to reach the Fulakunda, a people group in this area who are 99% Muslim.

Their maps highlight villages the Fulakunda people frequently visit, where they sell their cattle and send their children to school. These are prime spots for future ministries.

"Our prayer is that [American] churches would be willing to come in and adopt these areas," says Southern Baptist missionary Scott Bradford, the team supervisor. "These guys have helped us identify that there are... at least eight to 10 areas we need to address."

The young men's research trips often are eye-opening and marked by unexpected adventures. They've seen herds of wild monkeys running over the plains. They've eaten fresh cashew fruit straight off the tree. They've learned to rig up broken bike chains and ride without

brakes or good gears. They've coped with scorching temperatures.

"Flexibility is one of the biggest things you need," says Smith, from Faith Church in Andover, Kn.

"You never know what type of village you're running into," Smith adds. "You never know your sleeping arrangements. You never know what you're going to eat."

The young men cover about 10 miles and eight villages before lunchtime. Soon the midday temperatures are boiling and sweat has soaked their clothing. They will repeat this scenario for the next three days.

Richards, from First Church in Crestwood, Mo., says he prayed throughout the day, even as he and Smith powered their bikes through deep sand.

"When I'm praying throughout the day, it makes things easier," Richards says. "If I don't take the time to get into the Word when we are out on the road, it's a lot harder... It's just work."

Editor's note: For more information about Hands On, visit www.hands-on-africa.com or www.thetask.org/handson.